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ABSTRACT

These two teacher's guides accompany two videotape presentations on pedestrian safety for children, focusing particularly on avoiding the "dart-out" accident. "Stop and Look with Willy Whistle," which targets children from kindergarten through third grade, is an updated version of the film "Willy Whistle." "Walking with Your Eyes," which targets grade levels four through seven, updates the film "And Keep On Looking." Both earlier films were part of safety programs that were shown to be significantly effective in reducing child pedestrian accidents. Each guides begins with an introduction to the videotape, then provides background on the issue and describes the specific content of the tape. Teaching strategies, sample discussion questions, activities, other resources, and a user feedback form are included in each guide. (ND)

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ED 403 219

A Teacher's Guide

for the Video

Stop and Look With Willy Whistle

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STOP AND LOOK WITH WILLY WHISTLE

INTRODUCTION

Stop and Look With Willy Whistle is a video about pedestrian safety for young children from kindergarten through third grade. However, the information presented is universal and valid for all ages because it addresses accident situations in which we can all become involved. Its spokesperson, a whistle named *Willy Whistle*, is a lively animated character chosen as an attention getting device that children will naturally associate with the traffic environment.

The video is a product of a comprehensive pedestrian safety research program supported by the U.S. Department of Transportation, National Highway Traffic Safety Administration. Through that research, it was learned that young children up to about the age of seven are frequently involved in pedestrian accidents in which they dart into the street without stopping or looking. *The video therefore teaches the most critical behaviors needed by young pedestrians to avoid this type of accident, known as the "dart-out" accident.*

Stop and Look With Willy Whistle is an updated version of the highly successful film, *Willy Whistle*, also developed for the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration. Through years of use, the original film, produced in the mid-1970s, became dated and worn. Updating the material and producing it on video provided an opportunity to "fine tune" the advice on how to search while crossing the street as well as to include current model vehicles and wearing apparel. It also made it possible to upgrade the general appearance of both the film and the *Willy Whistle* character.

Although the production has been improved and updated, the basic pedestrian messages taught in the original film remain unchanged. That film was extensively field tested to determine its effectiveness in reducing accidents to young children. Results of those tests in cities including Los Angeles and Milwaukee showed reductions of 30 percent or more in child "dart-out" accidents. Few safety programs have been so carefully researched to insure their effectiveness and widespread applicability. Therefore, a specific objective of the production of the ***Stop and Look With Willy Whistle*** was to emulate the original, tested and proved film *Willy Whistle* as closely as possible.

BACKGROUND

More than 6,500 pedestrians are killed and more than 100,000 are injured each year in the United States. Young children are often involved in these crashes. The period of greatest accident involvement begins for children at about age two or three, peaks at about age six and continues into the teenage years. The causes and characteristics of these crashes for the full range of children's ages have been studied, and *it is known that most of these accidents are preventable.*

Accident prevention for one to four year olds relies primarily on keeping these children away from the traffic environment, since research has shown that the requisite knowledge and skills needed to avoid traffic accidents cannot be reliably learned by these very young children. Safety education for one to four year olds should consist of familiarization training whereby the children learn to recognize cars, streets and roads, and learn to stay away from them. They should be taught never to enter the street unless an adult is there to help them. Since children of this age spend most of their time at home, parents and guardians must shoulder much of the burden of their teaching and supervision.

Accidents to five, six and seven year olds, the most common ages for child pedestrian accidents, typically involve the sudden appearance of the child in the roadway. These children "dart-out" or "dash" into the street, usually at a non-intersection or "midblock" location. They appear so suddenly that drivers do not have time to react and avoid a crash. The play hours after school, especially during the spring, have a particularly high frequency of accidents, and these accidents typically occur in residential neighborhoods. Contrary to a popular belief, relatively few child pedestrian accidents occur during the trip to and from school. However, the fact that children of this age attend school makes it possible to teach them proper pedestrian behavior as part of the school curriculum. ***Stop and Look With Willy Whistle*** is designed to assist the educator by presenting the basic information in an entertaining way which will hold a child's attention.

As children become older, they venture into commercial and other areas that are generally more complicated to walk in than their own residential streets. Accidents involving these children more often occur at intersections with traffic signals and often involve more complex vehicle maneuvers or obstructions to vision. The advice in ***Stop and Look With Willy Whistle***, though still valid, is not extensive enough to cover the dangers encountered by the older child pedestrian. That is why a companion video, ***Walking With Your Eyes***, has also been prepared. It builds upon the foundation provided by ***Stop and Look With Willy Whistle*** and extends the advice to those pedestrian situations most often associated with accidents to the older child.

Pedestrian accidents are a major cause of death and injury to children throughout their development cycle. Very young children should be kept away from roadways or any locations where vehicles may be traveling unless they are accompanied by an adult. By about age five or six, children can and should be taught basic pedestrian safety behaviors. These fundamental pedestrian behaviors, however, will not fully protect children as they become older. Therefore, beginning at about age seven or eight, children should begin to be taught how to cope with more complex walking situations. The two videos, ***Stop and Look With Willy Whistle*** and ***Walking With Your Eyes***, were designed to be an integral part of child pedestrian education through the years when basic skills and habits are being developed. They are coordinated through the shared use of five characters: Officer Jim Miller, a policeman who is the expert on pedestrian safety; Laura, Woody and Billy, three "young teenagers" who assist Officer Miller in teaching younger children in ***Stop and Look With Willy Whistle*** and are themselves the students in ***Walking With Your Eyes***; and *Willy Whistle*, an animated character developed for NHTSA's pedestrian safety program.

CHILDREN AS PEDESTRIANS

Many people equate the physical and psychological abilities of children, their attitudes and their experience, to those of adults. As a result, they expect children in traffic to behave like "little adults" and fail to appreciate the situation of the child and adapt to it when trying to teach accident prevention. In order to effectively address the training of children as pedestrians, it is important to understand their cognitive and physical limitations with respect to the traffic environment. For example:

- Young children do not have fully developed sensory mechanisms. Capabilities such as peripheral vision and the judgment of speeds and distances which adults take for granted when negotiating in traffic are not present in most young children. Therefore, children must be taught to cope with traffic using only those faculties, such as central vision, which have been shown to be reliable.

- Children can typically deal with only one thing at a time, have short attention spans, are impulsive and inherently curious. Their traffic safety training must therefore consist of simple behavioral sequences and avoid conditional advice whenever possible.

- The thought processes of young children are often a combination of reality and fantasy, knowledge and miscomprehension. It should therefore not be assumed that they analyze the information provided by their senses in the same way as adults.

- The thinking of children is typically based on seeing rather than reasoning, and their experience base is small. This is why demonstrations of correct behavior by adults are so important.

- Children are often unpredictable and act on the basis of emotion rather than logic. Fear, excitement, anger or joy can totally overwhelm concerns for safety. A child may spontaneously bolt straight for or away from a particular person or object with no apparent reason and with total disregard for traffic. Many children even forget that they are entering the street. As a result, emphasis must be placed on learning the boundary between the "pedestrian world" and the potentially dangerous area where cars can drive.

- Young children are generally unaware of traffic laws and how they, as individuals, fit into the traffic system. Given their other limitations, it does not appear to be productive to dwell at all on the law when teaching young children.

In summary, children are curious, adventurous and act impulsively. The very young lack knowledge and the psychomotor development to make reliable judgments about the space (distance) and the time necessary for a safe street crossing. Their reasons for entering a street may have nothing to do with a planned street crossing. They still do not have

concepts of what is safe, dangerous, or illegal. They give most of their attention to play, family or friends, and it is unlikely that they will think about or respond to traffic at the same time, unless properly guided. Although older children venture out on purposeful pedestrian trips and have better developed psychomotor capabilities they are still at elevated risk because they are inexperienced, impulsive, easily distracted and lack specific pedestrian knowledge. Properly developed and effectively delivered training with continual reinforcement is needed to overcome these limitations and assist children in developing the skills and knowledge needed for lifelong safety as a pedestrian.

WHAT *STOP AND LOOK WITH WILLY WHISTLE* TEACHES

Research has shown that one method for reducing the likelihood of pedestrian accidents involving five, six and seven year olds is to teach the children that *wherever* or *whenever* they enter the roadway they should:

- Always stop at the curb or at the outside edge of a parked car.
- Always look ***left-right-left*** before entering the area of the roadway in which cars travel.
- If a car is coming, wait until it passes, and look ***left-right-left*** all over again.

This *stopping*, *looking* and *waiting* advice is applicable wherever and whenever a pedestrian crosses the street whether it is at an intersection or at a midblock location.

The *stopping* behavior gives the driver a chance to see the child and gives the child enough time to search properly for vehicular threats. Even if the child only slows rather than stops, the driver will have more time to see the child and avoid an accident.

The *looking* behavior gives the child the best chance to see oncoming vehicles. The ***left-right-left*** looking sequence was selected since it requires the child to look both ways and emphasizes searching to the left, which is the direction from which the majority of children are struck. Left is the direction of the most immediate threat when entering a typical roadway which carries two-way traffic. Since young children may not know left from right, the video includes a sequence in which yellow (left hand) and purple (right hand) gloves are used by *Willy Whistle* to help convey the correct search sequence.

The *waiting* behavior allows oncoming vehicles to pass before the child enters the road. Young children are not asked to estimate the speed and distance of oncoming vehicles and cross if they have time since the speed and distance judgments of five, six and seven year olds are not reliable. The "waiting" advice also includes the concept of *reinitiation* of the ***left-right-left*** sequence. In the event of an interruption, children tend to resume a rote behavioral sequence such as "stop and look ***left-right-left***" from the point at which they were interrupted. It is therefore essential to stress the need to start the sequence over from the beginning if a car passes or there is any other interruption.

Stop and Look With Willy Whistle shows children what to do with their eyes and feet whenever and wherever they cross the street. It is known that, if stopping and looking

become a consistent part of a child's street crossing behavior, fewer accidents will occur. Further, these simple stopping and looking behaviors are likely sufficient for safety while the child is still very young and confined to quiet residential streets, near home.

TEACHING STRATEGY

It is suggested that the teacher ask a set of discussion questions (sample questions are listed below) before presenting the video and then ask the same questions again after the video is shown. This procedure can be followed by one or more activities (samples are given below). The "parent letter" provided with these materials could be copied and sent home with the children or mailed in a regular school mailing. Getting the information to parents as soon as possible after the video is shown is an excellent way to promote reinforcement of the teaching principles beyond the classroom.

The video can be presented as a standalone activity or it can be incorporated in other school programs. For example, it can be given in connection with health and safety programs or social studies. Once presented, the activities can be incorporated in a variety of other curricula to reinforce the information and skills learned. For example, ball games played in a gym class can be designed to have children demonstrate the proper stopping and searching procedures before chasing a ball across a specified line. In arts and drama classes, children can draw and color *Willy Whistle* or can put on skits in which children take turns playing *Willy Whistle* directing other students in the proper ways to cross the street. One obvious program in which proper street crossing procedures should be included is school bus safety training. In addition, whenever students are taken outside the school environment on field trips, proper procedures for crossing streets should be emphasized and demonstrated at each opportunity.

SAMPLE DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- **What is the first thing you should always do before going into the street?**

  Answer: Stop at the curb.

  If the children are unaware of the concept of a curb, it should be defined as: *The line between where cars go and where people walk.* It might be a grassy strip, a sidewalk or the extension of the child's own front lawn. The key concept is that the child must stop before going from the safe area for walking into the area where cars drive.

- **After you stop, what is the next thing to do before entering the street?**

  Answer: Look ***left-right-left*** until you see that no cars are coming on ***each*** look.

  Small children can't judge the speed at which cars are traveling or whether or not the space between cars is adequate for a safe street crossing. Instead, they are asked to wait for three "clean" looks. Since most of their unsupervised street entries are on streets with low traffic volumes, it is not unreasonable for them to wait until there are no moving cars in sight.

- **When you look for cars and you see one coming from any direction, what should you do before crossing the street?**

  Answer: Let the car pass and then look ***left-right-left*** again until you see no cars coming on each look.

  Again, this is a very conservative behavioral sequence which was designed to overcome the perceptual shortcomings of young children. It is intended to have the children reinitiate the entire looking sequence from the beginning if interrupted during their search for cars.

- **What should you do before crossing the street when there are parked cars near you?**

  Answer: First stop at the curb. Check that the parked cars are not running and empty. Then go to the outside edge of the parked cars and stop again. Then look ***left-right-left*** and cross the street when there are no cars coming.

  This accomplishes the same purpose as the stop at the curb in the absence of parked cars. It permits the child to see and be seen while still in a relatively "protected" position. It also starts to establish a behavioral pattern taught in the materials for older children on how to deal with situations when the pedestrian is screened from a driver's view by other vehicles or objects.

ACTIVITIES

- Establish an imaginary curb in the classroom or on the playground and have each child come up to the curb, stop and look ***left-right-left***. The children can "role play" crossing the street with friends (each should stop and look ***left-right-left***), going to the store, crossing to be with friends, playing, etc.

- Have each child cut out a yellow glove and a purple glove from colored paper. Then, have the children wave the yellow glove and the purple glove in response to "left hand" and "right hand."

- Draw and color a picture of *Willy Whistle* including a yellow glove on his left hand and a purple glove on his right hand.

- Demonstrate and reinforce the "stop and look ***left-right-left***" procedure whenever you are walking with your students near streets, parking lots or driveways. Remember to exaggerate your head turns while searching. Most adults can make an effective ***left-right-left*** search using mostly peripheral vision. Children, however, must turn their heads to execute an effective search for traffic.

- If the children have trouble understanding the concepts of left and right, have them raise their left hands and extend their thumbs. Point out that, when the thumb is extended, the thumb and four fingers form an L.

- Have the children bring copies of the letter home to their parents.

- Involve the parents through presentations at parents' association meetings or any other time you are with them. Adults can benefit from the advice presented by the video, and parents are in an ideal position to reinforce the safety message you have presented in school.

OTHER RESOURCES

There are many other sources of pedestrian safety materials which can be of use with young children and their parents. These include:

- Pedestrian Coordinator
  NTS-23
  National Highway Traffic Safety Administration
  400 Seventh Street, S.W.
  Washington, D.C. 20590

  - ***Walking With Your Eyes*** reiterates the basic teaching from ***Stop and Look With Willy Whistle*** and then extends it for older children into the more complex pedestrian environments they face, including signalized intersections, parking lots and a range of "visual screens" other than parked cars. The video is suitable for children in the fourth grade and beyond whether or not they have seen ***Stop and Look With Willy Whistle***.

  - *Safe Street Crossing for Kids* describes the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration's Safe Street Crossing Program--an educational tool for children in kindergarten through third grade. Two pamphlets are included. One, subtitled *A Program That Works*, describes the results of conducting the program in Dade and Hillsborough Counties, Florida. The second, subtitled *A Planning Guide*, was prepared to familiarize traffic safety planners and other interested parties with the program.

  - *Prevent Pedestrian Accidents* is a one-page flyer for parents of preschool children. The reverse side, entitled *Myths and Facts About Pedestrian Safety*, provides advice for parents of elementary school children.

- Your local Automobile Club affiliated with the American Automobile Association can provide:

  - *Preschool Children in Traffic*, a set of five booklets for parents of preschool children. These materials provide a succinct discussion of the limitations of children in traffic and the steps parents can take to teach their children age-appropriate pedestrian skills.

- *Children in Traffic - Why Are They Different?* is a film distributed by the AAA Foundation for Traffic Safety. Originally produced in Germany, this film is an excellent guide for adults in learning the limitations of young children in a traffic environment. The booklet *Child and Traffic (A Guide for All Those Who Want to Help)* is an excellent adjunct to the film and is available from the same source. These items are recommended for use in getting parents and other adults involved and insuring that they understand the problems facing children in traffic.

- The National Safety Council
  444 North Michigan Avenue
  Chicago, Illinois 60611-3991

  - *Watchful Willie* is a pre-school curriculum developed by the Milwaukee Safety Commission and distributed by the National Safety Council. It is designed for children in an organized setting such as a day care center. Children learn to recognize cars, streets and roads and are taught to stay away from them unless a teacher, parent or other older person is available to help them cross safely.

- National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC)
  1834 Connecticut Avenue, N.W.
  Washington, D.C. 20009

  - *Walk in Traffic Safely* provides a package of child pedestrian safety materials. It includes two age-matched full-color children's booklets, a teacher's guide with family handouts, a parent's brochure and a poster. Activities are designed to be incorporated into the everyday routines common to child care centers, family child care programs and families.

- Harborview Injury Prevention and Research Center
  Harborview Medical Center
  325 Ninth Avenue, ZX-10
  Seattle, Washington 98104

  - *Wary Walker Pedestrian Program*

- Coronet/MTI Film and Video
  108 Wilmot Road
  Deerfield, Illinois 60015

  - *I'm No Fool as a Pedestrian* is a film produced by the Walt Disney organization

FEEDBACK

Materials such as ***Stop and Look With Willy Whistle*** can best be developed with good knowledge of how and when they are used. Research into ways to avoid accidents is only part of the solution. The findings must be presented so that you and other teachers, parents and people who work with children can use them most effectively. We would therefore welcome your inputs about ***Stop and Look With Willy Whistle***, and we ask you to provide them by completing and returning the brief information form on the next page. If you would prefer that your comments remain anonymous, just skip the name and address questions. The completed form should be sent to:

Pedestrian Coordinator
NTS-23
National Highway Traffic Safety Administration
400 Seventh Street, S.W.
Washington, D.C. 20590

THANK YOU!

*U.S. G.P.O.:1994-301-717:53

STOP AND LOOK WITH WILLY WHISTLE - USER FEEDBACK

Your name and position/title: _____ _____
(name) (position/title)

Name of your school, club or organization: _____

number and street: _____

city, state and zip code: _____

Is this a: preschool ☐ church or civic organization ☐
elementary school ☐ middle school/junior high ☐
camp ☐ other (please specify)
_____

How many children in each grade level viewed the video? (please fill in the number)

Pre-K ☐ K ☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ Other ☐ (specify) _____

When was the video shown? month _____ year ____

Where was the video shown? classroom ☐ auditorium ☐ other (please specify) _____

Approximately how much time was spent discussing this video with the children?
_____ minutes before showing _____ minutes after showing

Did this video depict the types of streets and neighborhoods that your children are likely to encounter? yes ☐ no ☐ If no, please describe the important differences.

_____

_____

Did the children learn about safe street crossing from the video?
yes (very much) ☐ yes (a little) ☐ no ☐

Would you recommend this video to others with similar groups of children?
yes (very much) ☐ yes (a little) ☐ no ☐

How important do you feel it is for children to learn about pedestrian safety?
very important ☐ somewhat important ☐ not important ☐

What could we do to improve the video and/or enhance the learning experience?

_____

_____

Were there any problems with the copy of the video you received (e.g., wouldn't play properly)?

_____

WILLY WHISTLE PEDESTRIAN SAFETY PROGRAM

Dear Parent:

Your child has recently been taught the basics of pedestrian safety as part of the *Willy Whistle* program. ***Willy Whistle*** is an animated video character developed as part of an extensive research program sponsored by the U.S. Department of Transportation, National Highway Traffic Safety Administration. After thorough testing, it was shown that child pedestrian accidents of the type addressed by the video can be reduced by 30% or more!

The lessons taught by *Willy Whistle* are simple:

- Always stop at the curb (this gives you time to look for cars and also gives a driver time to see you);
- Always look ***left-right-left*** until no cars are coming (looking in both directions is important and ***left-right-left*** ends in the direction from which the first car usually comes when you are crossing).
- Always stop at the curb even if there are parked cars. Check to make sure that the parked cars are empty and not running (that is, that the cars are not about to move), then go to the outside edge of the cars and look ***left-right-left*** for moving traffic.

You can help make the ***Stop and Look With Willy Whistle*** lesson more effective in two ways:

- Demonstrate these important behaviors when you walk with your child. Be sure to say that you are stopping and looking ***left-right-left*** as you do it. Remember to exaggerate your head turns a bit while looking to emphasize the need to look and see.
- Discuss the meaning of "curb" with your child. The curb is really the line between the place where cars can travel and the area where they cannot. That's the spot where we all should stop and look before going into the street.

If we work together to teach children these pedestrian basics, a lot of needless death and injury to children (and adults too!) can be avoided.

Please sign and return this letter to your child's teacher.

THANK YOU

_____ _____

Parent's Signature *Date*

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A Teacher's Guide for the Video

Walking With Your Eyes

National Highway Traffic Safety Administration
400 Seventh Street, S.W.
Washington, D.C. 20590

S/D 37023

WALKING WITH YOUR EYES

INTRODUCTION

Walking With Your Eyes is a video about pedestrian safety for older children. It is intended primarily for grade levels four through seven. However, the information presented is universal and valid for all ages because it addresses accident situations in which we can all become involved.

The video is a product of a comprehensive pedestrian safety research program supported by the U.S. Department of Transportation, National Highway Traffic Safety Administration. Through that research, it was learned that young children up to about the age of seven are frequently involved in pedestrian accidents in which they dart into the street without stopping or looking. *The video therefore begins by reviewing the most critical behaviors needed by young pedestrians to avoid this type of accident, known as the "dart-out" accident.* It then expands the basic advice to cover some of the more complex pedestrian accident situations encountered by children as they get older as well as by adults. These situations include: busy intersections where a pedestrian must deal with turning vehicles and traffic signals; "visual screen" situations in which something, such as a parked car, prevents a driver and pedestrian from seeing each other; and parking lots, which seem "sheltered" but are really just like roadways.

Walking With Your Eyes is an updated version of an existing film, entitled *And Keep on Looking*, developed in the early 80's for the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration. Updating the material and producing it on video provided an opportunity to "fine tune" the advice as well as to include current model vehicles and wearing apparel. It also made it possible to upgrade the general appearance of the film and include more of the animated character, *Willy Whistle*, to serve as a transition between this video and ***Stop and Look With Willy Whistle***, a companion video for younger children.

Although the production has been improved and updated, the basic pedestrian messages taught in the original film remain unchanged. That film was extensively field tested to determine its effectiveness in reducing accidents to young children. Results of those tests showed statistically significant reductions in the targeted child pedestrian accidents. Few safety programs have been so carefully researched to insure their effectiveness and widespread applicability. Therefore, a specific objective of the production of ***Walking With Your Eyes*** was to emulate the original, tested and proved film *And Keep on Looking* as closely as possible.

BACKGROUND

More than 6,500 pedestrians are killed and more than 100,000 are injured each year in the United States. Young children are often involved in these crashes. The period of greatest accident involvement begins for children at about age two or three, peaks at about age six and continues into the teenage years. The causes and characteristics of these crashes

for the full range of children's ages have been studied, and *it is known that most of these accidents are preventable.*

Accident prevention for one to four year olds relies primarily on keeping these children away from the traffic environment, since research has shown that the requisite knowledge and skills needed to avoid traffic accidents cannot be reliably learned by these very young children. Safety education for one to four year olds should consist of familiarization training whereby the children learn to recognize cars, streets and roads, and learn to stay away from them. They should be taught never to enter the street unless an adult is there to help them. Since children of this age spend most of their time at home, parents and guardians must shoulder much of the burden of their teaching and supervision.

Accidents to five, six and seven year olds, the most common ages for child pedestrian accidents, typically involve the sudden appearance of the child in the roadway. These children "dart-out" or "dash" into the street, usually at a non-intersection or "midblock" location. They appear so suddenly that drivers do not have time to react and avoid a crash. The play hours after school, especially during the spring, have a particularly high frequency of accidents, and these accidents typically occur in residential neighborhoods. Contrary to a popular belief, relatively few child pedestrian accidents occur during the trip to and from school. However, the fact that children of this age attend school makes it possible to teach them proper pedestrian behavior as part of the school curriculum. ***Stop and Look With Willy Whistle***, the companion to this video, is designed to assist the educator by presenting the basic information in an entertaining way which will hold a child's attention.

As children become older, they venture into commercial and other areas that are generally more complicated to walk in than their own residential streets. Accidents involving these children more often occur at intersections with traffic signals and often involve more complex vehicle maneuvers or obstructions to vision. The advice in ***Stop and Look With Willy Whistle***, though still valid, is not extensive enough to cover the dangers encountered by the older child pedestrian. That is why this video, ***Walking With Your Eyes***, has also been prepared. It builds upon the foundation provided by ***Stop and Look With Willy Whistle*** and extends the advice to those pedestrian situations most often associated with accidents to the older child. The two videos are coordinated through the shared use of five characters: Officer Jim Miller, a policeman who is the expert on pedestrian safety; Laura, Woody and Billy, three "young teenagers" who assist Officer Miller in teaching younger children in ***Stop and Look With Willy Whistle*** and are themselves the students in ***Walking With Your Eyes***; and *Willy Whistle*, an animated character developed for NHTSA's pedestrian safety program.

In summary, pedestrian accidents are a major cause of death and injury to children throughout their development cycle. Very young children should be kept away from roadways or any locations where vehicles may be traveling unless they are accompanied by an adult. By about age five or six, children can and should be taught basic pedestrian safety behaviors. These fundamental pedestrian behaviors, however, will not fully protect children as they become older and therefore, beginning at about age seven or eight, children should begin to be taught how to cope with more complex walking situations. The two videos, ***Stop and Look With Willy Whistle*** and ***Walking With Your Eyes***, were designed to be an integral part of child pedestrian education through the years when basic skills and habits are being developed.

WHAT *WALKING WITH YOUR EYES* TEACHES

Research has shown that one method for reducing the likelihood of pedestrian accidents involving five, six and seven year olds is to teach the children that *wherever* or *whenever* they enter the roadway they should:

- Always stop at the curb or at the outside edge of a parked car.
- Always look ***left-right-left*** before entering the area of the roadway in which cars travel.
- If a car is coming, wait until it passes, and look ***left-right-left*** all over again.

This *stopping*, *looking* and *waiting* advice is applicable wherever and whenever a pedestrian crosses the street whether it is at an intersection or at a midblock location.

The *stopping* behavior gives the driver a chance to see the child and gives the child enough time to search properly for vehicular threats. Even if the child only slows rather than stops, the driver will have more time to see the child and avoid an accident.

The *looking* behavior gives the child the best chance to see oncoming vehicles. The ***left-right-left*** looking sequence was selected since it requires the child to look both ways and emphasizes searching to the left, which is the direction from which the majority of children are struck. Left is the direction of the most immediate threat when entering a typical roadway which carries two-way traffic.

The *waiting* behavior allows oncoming vehicles to pass before the child enters the road. Young children are not asked to estimate the speed and distance of oncoming vehicles and cross if they have time since the speed and distance judgments of five, six and seven year olds are not reliable. The "waiting" advice also includes the concept of *reinitiation* of the ***left-right-left*** sequence. In the event of an interruption, children tend to resume a rote behavioral sequence such as "stop and look ***left-right-left***" from the point at which they were interrupted. It is therefore essential to stress the need to start the sequence over from the beginning if a car passes or there is any other interruption.

This basic stopping and looking advice is applicable wherever and whenever a pedestrian crosses the street whether it is at an intersection or at a midblock location. It is not, however, sufficient for older children and adults when they venture into more complex pedestrian situations. That is why ***Walking With Your Eyes*** expands the basic street crossing knowledge to the variety and complexity of roadway situations that children encounter as they become slightly older and walk beyond their own immediate neighborhoods.

The video covers traffic lights, "Walk" signals, crossing the street near a stopped school bus, walking in parking lots and other potentially dangerous roadway situations. Instruction is provided by Police Officer Jim Miller who shows his friends, Laura, Woody and Billy, how to walk safely and recognize potential dangers.

The primary objective of the video is to teach children that they should always stop and look ***left-right-left*** before entering the street. However, to achieve this objective, children must also know when, where and how to stop and look in complex roadway situations. Therefore, the video covers the following specific information:

Intersections

- Green lights and "Walk" signals do ***not*** mean that you can automatically go across the street. Rather, these signals tell you to stop, look ***left-right-left***, and then cross the street if it is safe. When you look to the left and right, check over your left and right shoulders for cars that might be turning into your path from an intersecting road.

- A flashing "Don't Walk" signal means keep on going if you've already started to cross the street but stay on the curb if you haven't started.

Visual Screens

- A visual screen is anything that blocks your view of oncoming vehicles and a driver's view of you. When encountering a visual screen, stop at the curb and look. Then go out slowly to the edge of the screen, stop again and look ***left-right-left*** again. Visual screens shown in the video include a stopped school bus, parked and stopped cars, a van and a tree.

Parking Lots

- Watch for cars that might back out and learn to recognize the cues that a vehicle is about to start backing (engine sound, engine exhaust and backup lights).

- Recognize visual screens in parking lots and remember to stop and look ***left-right-left*** at the edge of any visual screen.

Throughout ***Walking With Your Eyes***, the basic learning point remains the same: Always stop and look ***left-right-left*** before entering the roadway. The situations are more complex than those shown in ***Stop and Look With Willy Whistle*** for younger children, but the basic principles remain constant. This serves to emphasize the need to adopt and maintain a proper basic set of pedestrian behaviors.

TEACHING STRATEGY

It is suggested that the teacher ask a set of discussion questions (sample questions are listed below) before presenting the video and then ask the same questions again after the video is shown. This procedure can be followed by one or more activities (samples are given below).

The video can be presented as a standalone activity or it can be incorporated in other school programs. For example, it can be given in connection with health and safety programs or social studies. Once presented, the activities can be incorporated in a variety of other curricula as means of reinforcing the information and skills learned. For example, ball games played in a gym class can be designed to have children demonstrate the proper stopping and searching procedures before chasing a ball across a specified line. In arts and drama classes, children can put on skits and take turns directing other students in the proper ways to cross the street or negotiate a parking lot. One obvious program in which proper street crossing procedures should be included is school bus safety training. In addition, whenever students are taken outside the school environment on field trips, proper pedestrian procedures should be emphasized and demonstrated at each opportunity.

SAMPLE DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- **What is the first thing you should always do before going into the street?**

  Answer: Stop at the curb.

  If the children are unaware of the concept of a curb, it should be defined as: *The line between where cars go and where people walk.* It might be a grassy strip, a sidewalk or the extension of the child's own front lawn. The key concept is that the child must stop before going from the safe area for walking into the area where cars drive.

- **After you stop, what is the next thing to do before entering the street?**

  Answer: Look ***left-right-left*** until you see that no cars are coming on *each* look.

- **What does it mean when a traffic light changes from red to green or a pedestrian signal changes from "Don't Walk" to "Walk"?**

  Answer: Technically, it means that cars which could cross your path have been told to yield the right of way to you. It does *not* mean that it is safe to cross the street. A green light or a "Walk" signal means that you should start preparing to cross the street by looking for all of the various types of threats shown in the video.

- **What is a visual screen and how do you walk near one?**

  Answer: A visual screen is anything that prevents motorists and pedestrians from seeing each other. It is a block to normal scanning for oncoming cars by the pedestrian or for pedestrians by a driver. Parked cars, stopped cars, mailboxes, trees and bushes are all examples of visual screens. In order to deal with a visual screen as a pedestrian, you must first stop at the curb. This slows the pedestrian's entrance into the street and gives the pedestrian a chance to check a screening vehicle to be sure it will not move. Then, go to the outside edge of the visual screen and stop again. This accomplishes the same purpose as the stop at the curb in the absence of a screen. It permits

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the child to see and be seen while still in a relatively "protected" position. Finally, look ***left-right-left*** until you see that it is safe to cross.

- **What should you look for in parking lots?**

  Answer: You must remember that open areas in parking lots are just like roadways, and parked cars are often visual screens as you walk through the lot. Therefore, you should always stop and look ***left-right-left*** for oncoming vehicles before you enter an open area of a parking lot. You also have to look for vehicles which may be backing out of or entering parking spaces.

ACTIVITIES

- Demonstrate and reinforce the "Stop and look ***left-right-left***" procedure whenever you are walking with your students near streets, parking lots or driveways.

- Have the children draw a map of their route to school, the immediate neighborhood of the school or the route between school and an "attraction" such as a mall or ice cream store. Then have the children list the hazards at several street crossing points. Discuss the hazards (for example, parked cars that are visual screens, parked cars that might start to move, turning vehicles, multiple lanes of traffic, interpretation of traffic signals, roads where cars can travel at high speeds, roads with heavy traffic, hazards in commercial parking lots, etc.).

OTHER RESOURCES

There are many other sources of pedestrian safety materials which can be of use with young children and their parents. These include:

- Pedestrian Coordinator
  NTS-23
  National Highway Traffic Safety Administration
  400 Seventh Street, S.W.
  Washington, D.C. 20590

  - ***Stop and Look With Willy Whistle*** is a video that teaches basic street-crossing skills for young children. It is an update of the well-researched and highly successful *Willy Whistle* video, and is suitable for children from kindergarten through third grade.

  - *Safe Street Crossing for Kids* describes the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration's Safe Street Crossing Program--an educational tool for children in kindergarten through third grade. Two pamphlets are included. One, subtitled *A Program That Works*, describes the results of conducting the program in Dade and Hillsborough Counties, Florida. The second, subtitled *A Planning Guide*, was prepared to

familiarize traffic safety planners and other interested parties with the program.

- *Prevent Pedestrian Accidents* is a one-page flyer for parents of preschool children. The reverse side, entitled *Myths and Facts About Pedestrian Safety*, provides advice for parents of elementary school children.

- Your local Automobile Club affiliated with the American Automobile Association can provide:

  - *Preschool Children in Traffic*, a set of five booklets for parents of preschool children. These materials provide a succinct discussion of the limitations of children in traffic and the steps parents can take to teach their children age-appropriate pedestrian skills.

  - *Children in Traffic - Why Are They Different?* is a film distributed by the AAA Foundation for Traffic Safety. Originally produced in Germany, this film is an excellent guide for adults in learning the limitations of young children in a traffic environment. The booklet *Child and Traffic (A Guide for All Those Who Want to Help)* is an excellent adjunct to the film and is available from the same source. These items are recommended for use in getting parents and other adults involved and insuring that they understand the problems facing children in traffic.

- The National Safety Council
  444 North Michigan Avenue
  Chicago, Illinois 60611-3991

  - *Watchful Willie* is a pre-school curriculum developed by the Milwaukee Safety Commission and distributed by the National Safety Council. It is designed for children in an organized setting such as a day care center. Children learn to recognize cars, streets and roads and are taught to stay away from them unless a teacher, parent or other older person is available to help them cross safely.

- National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC)
  1834 Connecticut Avenue, N.W.
  Washington, D.C. 20009

  - *Walk in Traffic Safely* provides a package of child pedestrian safety materials. It includes two age-matched full-color children's booklets, a teacher's guide with family handouts, a parent's brochure and a poster. Activities are designed to be incorporated into the everyday routines common to child care centers, family child care programs and families.

- Harborview Injury Prevention and Research Center
  Harborview Medical Center
  325 Ninth Avenue, ZX-10
  Seattle, Washington 98104

  - *Wary Walker Pedestrian Program*

- Coronet/MTI Film and Video
  108 Wilmot Road
  Deerfield, Illinois 60015

  - *I'm No Fool as a Pedestrian* is a film produced by the Walt Disney organization

FEEDBACK

Materials such as ***Walking With Your Eyes*** can best be developed with good knowledge of how and when they are used. Research into ways to avoid accidents is only part of the solution. The findings must be presented so that you and other teachers, parents and people who work with children can use them most effectively. We would therefore welcome your inputs about ***Walking With Your Eyes***, and we ask you to provide them by completing and returning the brief information form on the next page. If you would prefer that your comments remain anonymous, just skip the name and address questions. The completed form should be sent to:

Pedestrian Coordinator
NTS-23
National Highway Traffic Safety Administration
400 Seventh Street, S.W.
Washington, D.C. 20590

THANK YOU!

* U.S. G.P.O.:1994-301-717:00056

WALKING WITH YOUR EYES - USER FEEDBACK

Your name and position/title: _____ _____
(name) (position/title)

Name of your school, club or organization: _____

number and street: _____

city, state and zip code: _____

Is this a: preschool ☐ church or civic organization ☐
elementary school ☐ middle school/junior high ☐
camp ☐ other (please specify)
_____

How many children in each grade level viewed the video? (please fill in the number)

3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5 ☐ 6 ☐ 7 ☐ 8 ☐ Other ☐ (specify) _____

When was the video shown? month _____ year ____

Where was the video shown? classroom ☐ auditorium ☐ other (please specify) _____

Approximately how much time was spent discussing this video with the children?
_____ minutes before showing _____ minutes after showing

Did this video depict the types of streets and neighborhoods that your children are likely to encounter? yes ☐ no ☐ If no, please describe the important differences.

_____

_____

Did the children learn about safe street crossing from the video?
yes (very much) ☐ yes (a little) ☐ no ☐

Would you recommend this video to others with similar groups of children?
yes (very much) ☐ yes (a little) ☐ no ☐

How important do you feel it is for children to learn about pedestrian safety?
very important ☐ somewhat important ☐ not important ☐

What could we do to improve the video and/or enhance the learning experience?

_____

_____

Were there any problems with the copy of the video you received (e.g., wouldn't play properly)?

_____